

Message Text

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SUBJECT: TREATY NEGOTIATIONS: CONSULTATIONS WITH CANAL ZONE
GROUPS

SUMMARY: FIRST CONSULTATION SESSIONS BETWEEN CANAL ZONE UNION AND CIVIC COUNCIL LEADERS AND POLCOUNS BLACKEN, AS LIAISON BETWEEN U.S. NEGOTIATORS AND CANAL ZONE, REVEALED CONSIDERABLE DESIRE FOR MORE REGULAR COMMUNICATION THROUGH THIS CHANNEL BETWEEN NEGOTIATORS AND CANAL ZONE, AND DEMONSTRATED CONCERN IN ZONE OVER FEELING OF HAVING BEEN UNINFORMED ON MATTERS WHICH WILL VITALLY AFFECT THEIR PERSONAL FUTURES. UNION LEADERS' QUESTIONS RELATED ALMOST ENTIRELY TO PROTECTION OF ORGANIZED LABOR AND COMPANY/GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES. CIVIC COUNCILS DISPLAYED MORE VISIBLE RESISTANCE TO IDEA OF NEW AGREEMENT WITH PANAMA UNLESS IT EMBODIED LONG LIST OF PREREQUESITES WHICH AMOUNT TO CONTINUATION OF ZONE SUBSTANTIALLY AS PRESENTLY EXISTS. FULL TEXT OF PRESS RELEASE FORMALLY ANNOUNCING DESIGNATION OF BLACKEN AS LIAISON OFFICER BETWEEN NEGOTIATORS AND CANAL ZONE FOLLOWS BELOW.
END

1. PRESS RELEASE (FULL TEXT BELOW) HAS BEEN ISSUED ANNOUNCING DESIGNATION OF POLCOUNS JOHN D. BLACKEN AS LIAISON BETWEEN U.S.
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TREATY NEGOTIATORS AND CANAL ZONE. RELEASE APPEARS IN EDITIONS

OF "SPILLWAY" (PANAMA CANAL COMPANY/CANAL ZONE GOVERNMENT HOUSE ORGAN) AND "SOUTHERN COMMAND NEWS" (COMPARABLE SOUTHCOM PUBLICATION) AVAILABLE FRIDAY, AUGUST 22, AND IS REPRINTED VERBATIM FROM "SPILLWAY" IN AUGUST 22 ENGLISH-LANGUAGE "STAR AND HERALD", AND (WITHOUT ATTRIBUTION TO "SPILLWAY") IN SPANISH-LANGUAGE "ESTRELLA".

2. BLACKEN CONSULTATIONS IN CANAL ZONE BEGAN ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 21, IN TWO MEETINGS, 1-1/2 HOURS WITH LEADERS OF UNIONS REPRESENTING EMPLOYEES OF COMPANY/GOVERNMENT (19 OF 22 UNIONS RECOGNIZED BY PCC/CZG WERE REPRESENTED), IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED BY TWO HOURS WITH LEADERS OF CIVIC COUNCILS REPRESENTING U.S. AND PANAMANIAN RESIDENTS IN ATLANTIC AND PACIFIC CANAL ZONE COMMUNITIES. BOTH GROUPS EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR BLACKEN LIAISON DESIGNATION, STATING THAT ZONE RESIDENTS AND EMPLOYEES HAD FELT SOMEWHAT ISOLATED FROM U.S. NEGOTIATORS, UNAWARE OF WHAT THEY WERE DOING, AND CONSEQUENTLY FELT HIGHLY UNCERTAIN AND INSECURE AS TO THEIR FUTURES. BOTH GROUPS WELCOMED IDEA OF CONTINUING CLOSER CONTACT, AND WERE RECEPTIVE TO BLACKEN SUGGESTION THAT HE MIGHT TRY TO ARRANGE ALSO FOR AMERICAN ZONE RESIDENTS AND UNION LEADERS TO MEET INFORMALLY (AS PANAMANIAN CIVIC COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES AND UNION LEADERS HAVE ALREADY DONE) WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF PANAMANIAN NEGOTIATING TEAM. BLACKEN MADE NO PREPARED STATEMENT, SAYING HE HAD COME TO LISTEN TO VIEWS AND QUESTIONS, WOULD RESPOND NOW OR LATER IF HE COULD, AND WOULD REPORT VIEWS EXPRESSED TO U.S. NEGOTIATING TEAM.

3. UNION LEADERS EXPRESSED NUMBER OF CONCERNS RELATING TO FUTURE OF ORGANIZED LABOR IN ZONE SUBSEQUENT TO NEW TREATY, INCLUDING PROTECTION OF EMOLUMENTS AND OTHER BENEFITS, INCLUDING RETIREMENT FOR THOSE SEPARATED, AND RETENTION OF AFFILIATION WITH U.S. PARENT UNIONS (WHICH MIGHT BE DIFFICULT FOR SOME IF PANAMANIAN LABOR CODE WERE TO APPLY WITHOUT SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR CANAL EMPLOYEES). AMERICAN CITIZEN UNION LEADERS RAISED SOME QUESTIONS REGARDING ABILITY AND WILLINGNESS OF GOP TO EXECUTE OBLIGATIONS REGARDING LABOR AFTER TREATY COMES INTO FORCE (ON WHICH POINT PANAMANIAN COUNTERPARTS SAID THEY HAD BEEN SOMEWHAT REASSURED THROUGH MEETINGS WITH TORRIJOS AND GOP NEGOTIATORS). PANAMANIAN-CITIZEN AND MIXED UNION LEADERS STRESSED THAT IN RECALLING ITS OBLIGATIONS TOWARD PCC/CZG U.S.-CITIZEN EMPLOYEES, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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U.S. NEGOTIATORS NOT OMIT CONSIDERATION OF INTERESTS OF PANAMANIAN NATIONALS EMPLOYED BY COMPANY/GOVERNMENT. ALL NOTED INTEREST OF ORGANIZED LABOR IN U.S., UP TO AND INCLUDING GEORGE MEANY, IN PROTECTION OF LABOR IN TREATY SETTLEMENT, AND STATED THAT UNIONS WERE ENGAGED IN ELABORATING DETAILED EXPOSITIONS OF TYPES OF PROTECTIONS THEY FELT NECESSARY.

4. MEETING WITH CIVIC COUNCILS INCLUDED CONSIDERABLE QUESTIONING

ENTIRELY FROM AMERICAN CIVIC COUNCIL LEADERS, DIRECTED TO RATIONALE FOR ANY CHANGE IN EXISTING TREATY, WHICH SOME LEADERS FELT NEITHER THEIR ZONE CONSTITUENTS, NOR MAJORITY OF CONGRESS AND AMERICAN PUBLIC, HAD ACCEPTED. PARTICULAR QUESTIONS RELATED TO PROSPECTS OF RECRUITMENT OR RETENTION OF U.S. EMPLOYEES UNDER PANAMANIAN JURISDICTION (I.E. POLICE AND COURTS), MAINTENANCE OF AMERICAN SCHOOLS FOR CHILDREN OF EMPLOYEES, AND APPREHENSION OVER REDUCTION IN LIVING STANDARDS GENERALLY THROUGH UNCOMPENSATED SUBJECTION TO PANAMANIAN CONDITIONS APPLYING OUTSIDE ZONE. SOME OF LANGUAGE USED WAS PARTICULARLY UNCOMPROMISING, AND PREVAILING ATMOSPHERE WAS ONE OF FEAR, FIRST OF UNKNOWN FUTURE BEING DISCUSSED BY U.S. AND GOP NEGOTIATORS ABOUT WHICH THEY KNEW NOTHING AUTHORITATIVE, AND SECOND (AMONG MORE INTRANSIGENT) FEAR OF WHAT LIFE WOULD BE LIKE LIVING IN PANAMA WITHOUT ZONE. PANAMANIAN CIVIC COUNCIL LEADERS WERE MUCH MORE MODERATE; WHILE VOICING SOME APPREHENSION THAT THEIR INTERESTS AND BENEFITS BE PROTECTED, MOST STATED THEY HAD BEEN CONSIDERABLY REASSURED THROUGH THEIR MEETINGS WITH TORRIJOS AND GOP NEGOTIATORS.

5. FULL REPORTS OF BOTH MEETINGS FOLLOW BY POUCH. FULL TEXT OF PRESS RELEASE ON BLACKEN DESIGNATION AS FOLLOWS: BEGIN QUOTE IN A MOVE DESIGNED TO DISPEL RUMORS AND ALLEVIATE UNWARRENTEED FEARS CONCERNING THE IMPACT OF A NEW PANAMA CANAL TREATY. CHIEF U.S. NEGOTIATOR, AMBASSADOR-AT-LARGE ELLSWORTH BUNKER, HAS DESIGNATED JOHN D. BLACKEN TO BE HIS LIAISON OFFICER WITH THE CANAL ZONE.

QUOTE BLACKEN, COUNSELOR OF EMBASSY FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS AT THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY IN PANAMA, HAS ADDRESSED THE CANAL ISSUE WITH SEVERAL CANAL ZONE GROUPS DURING THE PAST YEAR. IN HIS NEW ROLE AS LIAISON OFFICER, BLACKEN WILL SERVE AS A CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE U.S. NEGOTIATORS AND THE CANAL ZONE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND SEEK TO ANSWER SPECIFIC QUESTIONS AND DOUBTS OF CANAL EMPLOYEES.

QUOTE BLACKEN'S ACTIVITIES AS LIAISON OFFICER WITH THE CANAL ZONE WILL BE COORDINATED THROUGH THE OFFICES OF THE GOVERNOR AND THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND. REQUESTS FOR MEETINGS WITH BLACKEN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE AIDE TO THE GOVERNOR-CIVIC COUNCIL STAFF OFFICER (TELEPHONE 52-7870) AND U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER (TELEPHONE 82-4226). UNQUOTE
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